

**PAUL STRAND****JUNE 3 – AUGUST 23, 2015**

**FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE is pleased to invite you the press conference for the Paul Strand exhibit, which will take place on June 1, 2015 at 12:30 p.m. at the Bárbara de Braganza exhibition hall (Calle Bárbara de Braganza, 13). The press conference will include the participation of the Manager of the Culture Area of FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE, Pablo Jiménez Burillo, and the exhibit curator Peter Barberie, Curator of Photographs at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.**

INAUGURATION	June 2, 2015
PRESS CONFERENCE	June 1, 2015 at 12:30 pm, at the Bárbara de Braganza exhibition hall
DATES	June 3 – August 23.
VENUE	Bárbara de Braganza exhibition hall Calle Bárbara de Braganza, 13, Madrid 28004
CURATOR	Peter Barberie, Curator of Photographs, Philadelphia Museum of Art

**WEBSITE:**

<http://exposiciones.fundacionmapfre.org/exposiciones/es/paulstrand/>

Facebook [www.facebook.com/fundacionmapfrecultura](http://www.facebook.com/fundacionmapfrecultura)

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The international tour of this exhibit has been organized by the Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE, and has been made possible thanks to the Terra Foundation for American Art.

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From June 3 to August 23 the Bárbara de Braganza exhibition hall of FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE will host the most comprehensive exhibit ever dedicated to the American Paul Strand (New York, 1890 – Orgeval, France, 1976), widely acclaimed as one of the greatest photographers of the 20th century.

The exhibit takes visitors on a chronological journey through the photographer's six-decade career (1910s-1960s) and is divided into three broad sections beginning with his early efforts to turn photography into a key, independent medium of artistic expression and ending with his detailed portraits of people and places which often adopted the form of printed books.

The exhibition brings together more than 200 works from major museum and private collections, most notably the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which owns the most comprehensive body of work by Strand. The artist's first film, *Manhatta*, made in 1921, will also be screened in the hall.

The exhibit is the latest in a series by FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE dedicated to great masters of photography whose work is still relatively unknown in Spain. On this occasion it has the added interest of turning a spotlight on own collections, because in 2011 FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE acquired more than 50 photographs – most of them vintage prints – by Paul Strand and today is the European institution with the largest and most varied collection of his works.

A strong social motivation and firm political commitment marked Paul Strand's career, manifested in his constant desire to portray human conflict, and the show offers a profound insight into this aspect which the photographer regarded to be an essential part of his responsibility as an artist.

Born in New York, Strand began his studies of the medium with the social documentary photographer Lewis Hine, at the New York's Ethical Culture School (1907-1909), and subsequently struck up a close friendship with Alfred Stieglitz, another photographer and pioneer in the introduction of modern art in the United States. Strand managed to blend these two powerful influences and examined the possibilities of the camera more fully than any other artist before 1920, exploring photography's potential to exceed human vision by making intimate, detailed portraits and recording the nuances of machine and natural forms. In the 1930s, during his travels through the Southwest of the United States, Canada

and Mexico, he conducted a series of projects on specific communities, analyzing different locales through their people and distinctive cultural elements. Strand continued to focus on this type of work for the rest of his career, producing images of New England, France, Italy, the Hebrides, Egypt, Morocco, Romania and Ghana that led to the publication of widely-distributed books.

## Exhibit overview

### 1. From Pictorialism to Modernism

The exhibit begins with Strand's first works from the 1910s, which clearly illustrate his early command of the prevailing Pictorialist style. This section also demonstrates his gradual shift to the innovative images of 1915-1917, which offer new perspectives on New York's urban landscape and novel aesthetic ideas verging on abstraction. This new departure in Strand's photography reveals his growing interest in contemporary painting – especially Cubism and the work of American artists like Alfred Stieglitz – and his discovery of photography as an essential medium for modernist art.

The works from this period also include powerful close-up portraits of people he caught unaware in urban setting, among the earliest of their kind, as well as other images that reflect his fascination with the pace of life and the changing scale of the modern metropolis.



***Blind Woman, New York [Mujer ciega, Nueva York], 1916 (negativo), década de 1940 (copia)***

Copia a la gelatina de plata  
Colecciones FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE,  
FM000886  
© Aperture Foundation Inc., Paul Strand  
Archive

## 2. From Stieglitz' Circle to Portraits of the Community

During the 1920s – a period often dubbed "the machine age" – Strand explored photography's capacity to capture the fascinating details of machines while simultaneously expanding his ideas about the nature of portraiture. These new and varied preoccupations are evident in the sensual beauty of the close-ups of his wife, and in the fresh and profound studies of his new film camera. Strand applied these ideas to a series of photographs taken in places outside New York, like Maine, where he turned seemingly ordinary themes such as a tree trunk, rock or simple vegetation into surprisingly innovative images.

***Rebecca, New York [Rebecca, Nueva York], 1922***  
Copia al paladio

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Filadelfia.  
The Paul Strand Collection, adquirida  
con fondos aportados por el Sr. y la  
Sra. Robert A. Hauslohner (mediante  
intercambio), 1985-113-6  
© Aperture Foundation Inc., Paul  
Strand Archive



During the following decades Strand traveled tirelessly, motivated by his interest in widening photography's role. This section features his research into the camera's capacity to illustrate the passage of time and capture the specific qualities of a place, such as New Mexico, through its abandoned buildings. It also includes Strand's sojourn in Mexico (1932-1934) and highlights his return to a central theme: the portrayal of anonymous subjects. This period abroad influenced him profoundly and deepened his engagement with left-wing politics. The unique compositions in many of the works from this period, whether they depict individuals, collectives or even religious icons, reveal a deep empathy with the place and its people, an aspect that can also be seen in his series from the same decade dedicated to the Gaspé Peninsula in Canada.

In addition to photographs, this section features one of Strand's most important films, ***Manhatta*** (1921), the first he ever made and the result of close collaboration with the painter and photographer Charles Sheeler. Widely regarded as the first American avant-garde film, this short "scenic documentary" captures New York's vibrant energy, juxtaposing the human drama on the streets with abstract bird's eye views from high

buildings and scenes of the ferry and harbor, all accompanied by the poetry of Walt Whitman.



***Church, Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico***  
**[Iglesia, Ranchos de Taos, Nuevo México],**  
**1930**

Copia al platino

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Filadelfia. The Paul Strand Collection, adquirida con el Fondo Annenberg para Grandes Adquisiciones , 2013-76-109

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### **3. Sketches of History and Modernism**

In the 1940s books became Strand's preferred form of presentation for his work, enabling him to combine photography's expressive capacity with film's narrative. The exhibit focuses on three of these projects, each of which clearly demonstrates the artist's approach to the places portrayed and their culture: New England (1950), Luzzara (1953) and Ghana (1963). Photographs of France (1952), Egypt (1959), Romania (1960) and Morocco (1962) are also included in this section.

In his photographs of **New England**, Strand explores its cultural history to convey an idea of the past and present that suggests an ongoing struggle for democracy and individual freedom. This project, which led to the book *Time in New England*, reflects his political commitment and was published in 1950, the year that Strand moved to France due to the growing anti-communist feeling in the United States. He described the region as "a battleground where intolerance and tolerance faced each other over religious minorities, over trials for witchcraft, over the abolitionists... It was this concept of New England that led me to try to find... images of nature and architecture and faces of people that were either part of or related in feeling to its great tradition". Similar preoccupations are found in the project he carried out in France, leading to the publication in 1952 of *La France de profil*.

In **Luzzara** (Italy) he focused his attention on the daily realities of a northern town recovering from the traumas of war and fascism. This series is centered on images of the townspeople and fulfills his long-held ambition to create an important work of art

dedicated to a single community. The photographs give rise to the book *Un Paese: Portrait of an Italian Village* (1955), with an essay by Cesare Zavattini.

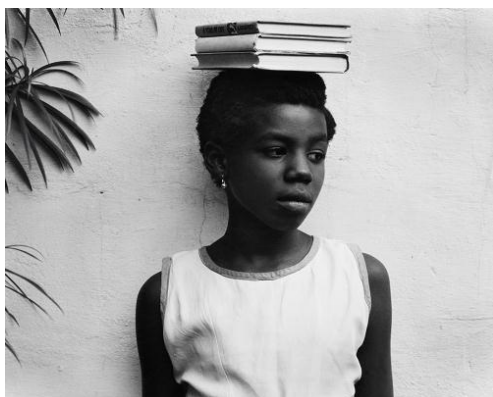
In 1963 Strand traveled to **Ghana** at the invitation of Kwame Nkrumah, the country's first president following the end of British rule. Fascinated by the country's incipient democracy, Strand was excited about the opportunity to photograph a place undergoing rapid political transformation and modernization. He admired the efforts of a newly-independent nation to carve out a future for itself alongside traditional aspects of Ghanaian culture. Portraiture was central to the project, and his photographs of the country were published in 1976 in *Ghana: An African Portrait* .

In his later years Strand turned his attention increasingly to his house in **Orgeval**, on the outskirts of Paris, often addressing the countless discoveries he made in his own garden. Some of these images are a reflection of his earlier work.



***The Family, Luzzara (The Lusettis) [La familia, Luzzara (los Lusetti)], 1953 (negativo), mediados-finales de la década de 1960 (copia)***

Copia a la gelatina de plata  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Filadelfia. The Paul Strand Collection, adquirida con fondos aportados por Lois G. Brodsky y Julian A. Brodsky, 2014-8-39  
© Aperture Foundation Inc., Paul Strand Archive



***Anna Attinga Frafra, Accra, Ghana [Anna Attinga Frafra, Acra, Ghana], 1964***

Copia a la gelatina de plata  
Colecciones FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE, FM000976  
© Aperture Foundation Inc., Paul Strand Archive

## **CATALOG**

FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE has published an exhibition catalog entitled *Paul Strand* in which the curator Peter Barberie and other experts offer their insights into the photographer's multifaceted work. This catalog will become a work of reference for subsequent research on the photographer.

## **FREE GUIDED TOURS**

Tuesdays at 11 a.m., noon, 1 p.m., 5 p.m., 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.\*

\*The groups will be formed as people arrive at the hall (max. 14 people per guided tour + guide).

## **AUDIO GUIDE SERVICE**

Audio guide (Spanish)

App available